

Distinguished chairs Gerratana and Ritter, Distinguished Ranking members Srinivasan and Markley and honorable members of the Public Health Committee: My name is Joshua Quintana and I am here to speak in support of H.B. 6285. I ask that you raise this bill for the good of those who are unable to protect themselves, our most vulnerable, our Children.

The purpose of this law is to educate the public and protect small children under the age of 7 years and weighing less than sixty pounds from secondhand smoke. This law is about the protection of our children. Many people believe that smoking in cars is safe if the windows were open. That perception needs to be addressed for the health of our children.

Over the last 20 years much has been learned and discovered both scientifically and medically about the effects of smoking. Studies by the University of Harvard, Stanford University, the Surgeon General of the United States, and others report that the confined space of a motor vehicle increase the exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. The Center for Disease Control reports that one cigarette emits 11 cancer causing poisons and 250 known carcinogen toxins. The reports from Harvard and the Surgeon General state that even if the windows are rolled down the level of exposure is still above safe levels, and what is worse is that these toxins remain ingrained in the upholstery of the car, in the seatbelts further exposing children. There is no difference in the risk to the child whose immune system is still developing and vulnerable to these toxins in the air.

Here are the facts:

- Harmful Chemicals build up on the car restraint and in the children's clothes transferring these toxins, through contact, to the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Smoking a single cigarette for just 5 minutes in a car, the level of toxins in the air in that confined space reaches dangerous levels.
- Children who spend an hour in a confined smoke space can inhale enough toxic chemicals equal to smoking ten cigarettes.
- These particles are about 1/30th the width of an average human hair containing cancer-causing chemicals, and can lodge deep in a person's lungs, irritating the respiratory system.
- A child's respiratory system is fully mature about age 7.

The public is already responding to these hazards and seven states have already acted to protect children from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Louisiana, Arkansas, California, Utah, Oregon, Vermont and Maine along with the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have passed laws and ordinances similar to this legislation. Six states restrict smoking in vehicles carrying children in the care of childcare facilities.

To those who would say that Government shouldn't try to regulate what you do privately in your home: I say that your home is your home; it is a private and personal area. However unlike your home a car is a confined area that is in the public eye. Consider that children do not have the choice of whether or not they get exposed to secondhand smoke in the car. It is not invasive to protect the health and wellbeing of children who cannot afford to be exposed to secondhand smoke. The car is the smallest most confined space that anyone smokes in and the child is a

captive, especially when the child is strapped in the car seat. Legislation such as this is aimed at the protection of those who cannot protect themselves.

In Maine, Rep. Brian Duprey R-Hampden, a Libertarian, said he was moved to action by the sight and smell of children showing up at his childcare business in Bangor, Maine often sick and smelling of tobacco. After the City of Bangor in Maine passed similar legislation, Duprey said, "The children smelled better and the rate of illness dropped sharply. This works and "This is the right thing to do." A study showed that in the first 2 years smoking in cars with children was reduced 44%.

There is no denying the effects of secondhand smoke. The facts are indisputable and something needs to be done. The State has an obligation to protect the lives of kids and secondhand smoke has been proven to be harmful to children. Adults have a choice when it comes to smoking in cars, children do not - they need our protection.

Thank you for your time and consideration.